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Mr. Bryan May

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

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● (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.)): Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, February 1, 2018, the committee is resuming its consideration of Bill C-62, an act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other acts.

Today the committee will be hearing from federal departments. Welcome to all of you.

With us here today we have from the Canada Border Services Agency, Marc Thibodeau, director general, labour relations and compensation. From the Canada Revenue Agency, we have Ann Marie Hume, deputy assistant commissioner, human resources branch. From Correctional Service of Canada, we have Kristel Henderson, acting director, corporate labour relations. From Statistics Canada, we have Geoff Bowlby, director general, collection and regional services branch, census, operations and informatics field. From the Treasury Board Secretariat, we have Sandra Hassan, assistant deputy minister, compensation and labour relations sector, and once again we have today Dennis Duggan. Welcome to all of you. I understand a number of you have opening remarks so we're going to get started right away.

From the Canada Border Services Agency, Marc Thibodeau, director general, labour relations and compensation, the next seven minutes are all yours.

Mr. Marc Thibodeau (Director General, Labour Relations and Compensation, Canada Border Services Agency): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. I'm pleased to be here on behalf of the Canada Border Services Agency for your deliberations on Bill C-62 and would like to thank you for the invitation. As the committee is aware, Bill C-62 combines the previous Bill C-5, regarding sick leave provision in the public service, and Bill C-34, which concerns collective bargaining and essential services. I will focus my remarks on the last component of essential services as it relates to the CBSA.

[*Translation*]

The agency's dual mandate of facilitating the entry of people and goods at the border while upholding national security means that it must retain numerous employees in positions designated as essential.

To give you a sense of the magnitude of this responsibility, allow me to illustrate [illegible].

The agency employs approximately 14,000 individuals, who provide service at over 1,100 locations across Canada and abroad. Our workforce consists of both uniformed and non-uniformed staff who ensure that border operations run smoothly on a 24/7 basis.

[*English*]

On an average day, the CBSA will process over 255,000 travellers who come to Canada by land, rail, marine, and air. In a year, our officers will perform over 17 million commercial releases, conduct over 89,000 commercial examinations, inspect 780,000 courier shipments, seize $400 million in drugs, and collect $30.5 billion in duties and taxes owed to the crown.

In addition, the CBSA plays an important role in protecting the safety and security of Canadians. For example, border services officers increasingly intercept highly toxic substances such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues in our postal and air cargo courier streams. Between May 2016 and December 2017 the agency made 193 seizures totalling over 32 kilograms, which are most often smuggled into Canada in shipments that would otherwise be legitimate.

[*Translation*]

Essential service positions are critical for CBSA operations and allow the agency to keep Canada open for business. The current Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act defines an essential service as any service, facility or activity necessary for the safety or security of the public or a segment of the public.

Essential services and the agreements that govern them, as determined by the CBSA and the bargaining agent, are imperative to ensuring public safety and security, and are in line with the CBSA's legislative mandate under the Canada Border Services Agency Act.

[*English*]

This is why approximately 75% of FB positions that are at CBSA are designated essential, and out of that 75%, 95% are front-line positions. The remaining 5% of designated positions fall within the other bargaining unit. So for greater clarity, 75% of the FB positions are designated essential, and 5% of positions in the other groups. Currently the number and percentage of essential services as positioned relative to the CBSA workforce has remained relatively stable in time. Since 2003, the creation of the agency, we have been at about 75% or 80% of the population.

The agency welcomes the committee's study of this bill, and steps taken to bring clarity to the process, as essential services are central to the agency's mandate and operations.

● (1535)

[*Translation*]

This concludes my opening statement.

I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

From the Correctional Service of Canada, we have Kristel Henderson, acting director, corporate labour relations for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristel Henderson (Acting Director, Corporate Labour Relations, Correctional Service of Canada): Mr. Chair and honourable members of the committee, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, regarding your study on Bill C-62.

My name is Kristel Henderson. I am Acting Director of Corporate Labour Relations at CSC. I am hopeful that I can provide the committee information on our workforce at CSC and our labour relations regime as it currently stands today, in order to provide some further context for your consideration of Bill C-62.

I will begin by providing an overview of the work that we do. CSC is responsible for administering sentences of two years or more in institutions of various security levels, and supervising offenders under conditional release.

On a typical day, CSC manages approximately 15,000 offenders within our 43 institutions across Canada, in addition to more than 8,500 offenders under supervision in the community.

[*English*]

As one of the largest departments in the public service, the Correctional Service of Canada employs approximately 18,000 staff members from across the country. Our organization's workforce includes correctional officers, parole officers, program delivery officers, health professionals, electricians, food services staff, and staff providing corporate and administrative functions at the local, regional, and national levels. Our employees work within institutions, parole offices, and administrative or headquarters areas in all 10 provinces and three territories. While some work mostly regular day jobs, others work shifts that entail long hours. Two occupational groups, for the most part exclusive to CSC, represent over half of all staff employed in operational units.

The correctional officer group, or CX group comprises 41.8% of staff while another 14.1% of staff are in the welfare programs, or WP category. This group includes parole and program officers who work in CSC institutions and in the community. The remainder of CSC's workforce reflects the variety of other skills required to operate institutions and community offices such as health professionals or corporate and administrative staff.

[*Translation*]

All staff work together to ensure that institutions operate in a secure and safe way and that offenders are effectively supervised on release, with specialized initiatives and approaches for indigenous offenders, offenders with mental health needs, and women offenders.

Our workforce and workplace directly impact the success of our operations and how we fulfil our mandate. Without a strong and professional workforce, and without a workplace conducive to its development and well-being, we would not be able to get these jobs done.

As this committee is aware, Bill C-62 would restore the public service labour relations regime that existed prior to the coming into force of certain budget implementation acts. These include those related to essential services in the resolution of collective bargaining disputes, along with the rights of bargaining agents to negotiate terms and conditions of employment related to sick leave and disability matters.

● (1540)

[*English*]

The provisions of the proposed bill support the return to the former negotiation approach to determining an organization's essential services profile. In that regard, CSC has always been committed to establishing a listing of essential positions, which promotes a profile that balances opportunities for active union involvement and manageable operational risk, and that is based on sustainable rationales.

Most positions located within our institutions and community offices continue to meet the definition of essential service in that they provide a service that is or will be at any time necessary for the safety or security of the public or a segment of the public. As a result, a re-examination of the proposed profile, where safety and security contributions can be managed through alternative approaches in the event of a strike, will be required to determine where we may be able to assume any additional degree of operational risk management. The amendments to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act, as introduced by former Bill C-4, removed the choice of dispute resolution method for the core public administration and made conciliation the primary mechanism, except in cases where 80% or more of the positions in a bargaining unit are designated by the employer as essential.

Historically the dispute resolution method selected by bargaining agents active within CSC has been conciliation even when 100% of the positions within the bargaining unit have been deemed essential. It is expected that, should Bill C-62 come into force, bargaining agents would revert to their historical dispute resolution method. In addition, Bill C-62 also proposes to repeal a section of former Bill C-59, the implementing legislation of budget 2015.

Division 20 of part three of Bill C-59 authorized the Treasury Board to establish and modify terms and conditions of employment related to the sick leave and disability regime of employees, notwithstanding the provisions of the FPSLRA, but outside of the collective bargaining process. Those provisions came into force upon royal assent, although to date, they have not been implemented by the Treasury Board.

If enacted, Bill C-62 would allow consideration of the terms and conditions of employment related to the sick leave of CSC employees to be dealt with as part of the collective bargaining process.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome your questions.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next, from Statistics Canada, we have Mr. Geoff Bowlby, director general, collection and regional services branch, census, operations and informatics field.

Mr. Bowlby, the next seven minutes are yours.

Mr. Geoff Bowlby (Director General, Collection and Regional Services Branch, Census, Operations and Informatics Field, Statistics Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the committee for inviting us to appear today in the context of its study of Bill C-62, the proposed act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other acts.

Statistics Canada, now entering its 100th anniversary, has grown from the humble beginnings of one office and 123 employees in 1918, to approximately 5,500 employees spread across three major regional offices, and approximately 1,600 statistical survey operations interviewers across the country. The agency's reach extends from coast to coast to coast and far beyond, while continuing to provide statistical information to Canadians and the world.

[*Translation*]

Statistics Canada produces statistics that help Canadians to better understand their country, its people, its resources, its economy, its society and its culture. In addition to a census every five years, we conduct more than 350 investigations into practically every aspect of life in Canada.

As Canada's central statistics agency, Statistics Canada is required by law to take on that function for Canada as a whole, and for each province and territory. We provide Canadians with useful and objective information that serve as the basis for well-informed decisions. In addition, we have adopted the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to help us in supporting our mandate and in serving Canadians better.

[*English*]

Over the past century, we have seen the rapid evolution of technology and the emergence of an increasingly global society and economy. Statistics Canada has changed as well, enhancing our processing, analytical capabilities, and expanding our programs.

Statistical survey operations is a separate organization that employs a workforce of interviewers that are at the heart of the operation that converts surveys into the information that Canadians need. The interviewer workforce has been conducting surveys for decades, with the work evolving over time. Surveys were first conducted on paper, then computer punch cards, then advanced electronic questionnaires and laptops, or the tablets used today. This workforce is spread throughout the country and involves interviewers who work from home, or in one of our five large call centres.

● (1545)

[*Translation*]

Now more than ever, we focus on the needs of our users. We employ cutting-edge statistical methods and we work with our clients, stakeholders and partners in order to respond to Canadians' information needs. We continue to be innovative in using new tools and new methods to make our data more accessible and more relevant.

[*English*]

Without a doubt, Statistics Canada's day-to-day business is numbers, data, measurements, surveys, statistics, and analysis. The agency is responsible for a number of surveys and programs, two of which are essential to the safety and security of Canadians, specifically on the basis of income security. These are the labour force survey and the consumer price index, both of which fall under specific legislation to bind accountability.

The labour force survey, or LFS, data are used to produce the well-known unemployment rate, as well as other standard labour market indicators such as the employment rate and the participation rate. The regional rates of unemployment produced by Statistics Canada are based on information collected through the labour force survey, which is legislated under the Employment Insurance Act and regulations. These rates establish both eligibility for employment insurance and the amount received of those approved.

The scale of the labour force survey program, a 10-day collection period done monthly from coast to coast to coast, requires that approximately 82% of the interviewer workforce be assigned to this program. Furthermore, legislation requires that cost of living adjustments be made for all old age security benefits quarterly, and for existing Canada pension plan benefits annually. These benefit adjustments are calculated by using the all-items index of the consumer price index, so that benefits keep up with the cost of living.

CPI calculation is essential for the proper administration of the OAS and Canada pension plan programs. Without the CPI all-items index, OAS and CPP benefit adjustments would not be possible, thereby creating a negative financial impact for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Like other organizations in the federal public service, we have followed the development of Bill C-62. We have examined the impact of the proposed changes from the points of view of an employer and an organization. Over the years, Statistics Canada has established very positive labour relations with its union representatives. We are pleased to have the opportunity to continue that partnership in order to provide a healthy and pleasant workplace for our employees. We are committed to negotiating fair and transparent essential services agreements with our colleagues in the unions, through a negotiation process that focuses on collaboration, so that we produce fair results both for employees and employers.

[*English*]

In order to ensure that our central programs are not adversely affected, Statistics Canada has mitigation strategies in place for the continued delivery of its programs, including the LFS and CPI that I just mentioned, and the protection of its data. Contingency plans are kept current to ensure that at no point are essential programs at risk in the event of a plausible disruption.

The agency would not have known such great success over the past century if it wasn't for the generations of dedicated and committed experts who have worked tirelessly to provide high-quality statistical information that matters.

I'd like to thank the members of the committee for this opportunity to speak today. We'd be more than happy to address any questions you may have.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now, from the Treasury Board Secretariat, we have Sandra Hassan and Dennis Duggan. The next seven minutes are yours.

Ms. Sandra Hassan (Assistant Deputy Minister, Compensation and Labour Relations Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm pleased to briefly outline the role of the employer of the core public administration with respect to Bill C-62, an act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other acts. The core public administration comprises the departments and organizations named in schedules I and IV of the Financial Administration Act.

[*Translation*]

To begin, I would like to stress that the government is committed to restoring the fair and balanced labour laws that recognize the important role of bargaining agents in protecting the rights of employees. Bill C-62 would achieve this by returning the labour relations regime, and the roles and responsibilities of the employer, to what it was before legislative changes were introduced in 2013.

With Bill C-62, we are returning to the pre-2013 collective bargaining system, and the employer's role in it. In the event that bargaining comes to an impasse, bargaining agents would be given the power to determine which dispute resolution process they wish to use, conciliation/strike or arbitration.

The dispute resolution method would not be predetermined by imposition of the legislated provisions of the act. Nothing in Bill C-62 changes the role of the employer from what it was before 2013.

● (1550)

[*English*]

Another way the legislation would create a more balanced system relates to how public interest commissions and arbitration boards must weigh factors when making awards or recommendations. Under the current system, they must give greater consideration or more weight to recruitment and retention as well as to Canada's fiscal circumstances.

Under Bill C-62 these two factors would be among other factors a third party decision-maker must consider. It will be up to the decision-maker to determine how much weight would be given to each factor. However, the employer would retain the right to make arguments on the state of the Canadian economy as well as on the need to attract and retain competent persons to the public service to meet the needs of Canadians.

These are among the criteria that can be argued before a public interest commission or arbitration board, the only change being that those on the commission or board have the flexibility to weigh the factors as they see fit.

[*Translation*]

In the area of essential services, the key principle is ensuring the safety and security of the public. Under the current system, which Bill C-62 seeks to change, the employer has the exclusive authority to designate essential services.

Bill C-62 would allow bargaining agents to represent the interests of employees in negotiating essential services. The employer would no longer have the exclusive right to determine which services are essential and to designate the positions necessary to deliver these services

Rather, the employer would work with the bargaining agents to identify essential service positions, and would enter into essential services agreements with them. These agreements identify, first, the types and numbers of positions in the bargaining unit needed for the employer to provide essential services and, second, the specific positions necessary for that purpose.

[*English*]

In the new system, the role of the Treasury Board Secretariat would be, first of all, to provide guidance and advice to departmental officials; second, to review, at the department's request, any positions in dispute; third, to negotiate essential services agreements at the national level; fourth, to apply to the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board for unresolved matters and to provide representation; and finally, to maintain a central database of all positions identified as providing an essential service.

Mr. Chair, these are just a few examples of how Bill C-62 will restore the system to the way it existed before 2013 and the employer in its previous role.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we go over to questions. First up we have MP Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My apologies for being late.

I also want to thank our witnesses for joining us today.

Today, we are discussing Bill C-62, An Act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other Acts, but behind this act, there is a partisan objective, as I have already mentioned. During the election campaign, the Liberal government promised to give sick leave back to the unions, a gift of $1 billion. That is the cost of this bill.

What I find interesting in today's presentations is that we are also dealing with the notion of essential services. In the light of my previous experience, the presentations from the Canada Border Services Agency and the Correctional Service of Canada were of particular interest to me.

Mr. Thibodeau, your mandate is to control access to the borders for goods and for people. Heaven knows, that it is an important role, particularly in view of the current migrant crisis. You also have a mandate to ensure national security, and that is what concerns me today. The bill has an effect on labour relations, but also on your ability as an employer to ensure the security of Canadians. To do that, you must have the necessary tools.

We have been told that CBSA officers in the field cannot disclose to the media the number of illegal migrants crossing the border. However, last summer, there were 300 to 400. Those officers are also under pressure to deal with the claims quickly, which, of course, makes Canadians uneasy about how rigorously the process designed to protect them is being applied.

As for essential services, you mentioned that you have to consider the issue, given the new legislation. What will be the effect of the new legislation on the essential services your agency provides? What amendments could we make to the bill to make sure that the priority is first and foremost the security of Canadians?

● (1555)

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: Thank you for your question.

The designation, the determination, of essential positions will be done collaboratively with the union rather than unilaterally by the department or the employer.

In the regime, the agreement, that we have established in the current round, 95% of positions on the border are designated essential. That designation follows discussions with the union.

The issue of health and safety is central, and critical to us, whatever the legislative regime.

Hon. Steven Blaney: So safety is important.

I was having a discussion with my colleague Kelly McCauley just now and we discovered that, after the Liberals came to power, there were cuts to the CBSA staff responsible for ensuring safety on the borders, as well as a reduction in the overall budget envelope for the agency.

Are you in a position to give me specific details about that this afternoon?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: No, I would not be able to do so this afternoon.

Hon. Steven Blaney: In any event, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has already provided the data to us, but it would be interesting to have it confirmed by the agency.

I will now turn to Ms. Henderson, from the Correctional Service of Canada, the CSC.

In your presentation, you talked about the operational risks of withdrawing CSC officers. What will the operational risks be under the new legislation? What means will you use to mitigate the impact of the changes that the new legislation will bring about?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: As was the case under the previous regime, we will be able to designate essential positions in discussions and negotiations with the bargaining agents. About 85% of the positions are located in institutions or in the community. Those positions provide essential services. While the labour relations regime may change, we will always be able to provide those services, which are essential for health and safety.

Hon. Steven Blaney: You are going to do that in collaboration with the union?

Do you have data on the absentee rate for employees in the Correctional Service?

General data show that the absentee rate is higher in the public service than in the private sector, but I would like to know whether you have data that specifically applies to the Correctional Service. Can you tell me a little about that?

● (1600)

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I do not have data on the absentee rate at hand, but we will certainly be able to provide you with it.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes, I would like that. Thank you.

Let me quickly ask my final question.

Mrs. Hassan, you have said on a number of occasions that the Treasury Board is going back to the previous procedures, but could we amend any provisions in this bill to make sure that the balance is maintained and that it will always be possible to defend the interests of the taxpayers? Could we make sure, for example, that the public service is competitive, while not having an undue advantage over the private sector?

[*English*]

The Chair: You're over time, but I will allow a brief answer.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Bill C-62 provides that balance between the interests of the employer and those of the bargaining agents. It establishes that negotiation will be a key factor.

I have no suggestions as to amendments to this bill.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay. Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Ruimy, please, you're next.

Mr. Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, Lib.): Thank you very much for coming, everybody, and for your testimony.

I find it a little offensive when our colleagues on the other side suggest we're giving something to you for the sake of giving it to you, rather than it being earned.

Ms. Henderson, with 18,000 correctional service members, how would you define the work of a correctional service person? Is it stressful? Is it tough work?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Certainly. The front-line officers are confronted with situations that are difficult from a mental health perspective. The situations they have to face and the security incidents they have to deal with, these are certainly....

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Do you see high levels of stress, mental illness, perhaps PTSD?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I couldn't give you exact numbers, but certainly the reports are that occupational stress-related incidents or injuries is high amongst correctional officers.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: When the legislation, going back to 2013, was taken away, how did that impact your members?

You're already in a stressful situation. We've heard from other witnesses that when they go to work it feels as if they don't want them there because they are making it even harder for them to be there.

Did it make it harder for them to work there?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I don't know that it made it harder for them to work there. CSC's work in the community is difficult. Whether or not it made it more difficult to work there I wouldn't be able to say. That being said, we all recognize that the work they do in institutions and in communities is important, and it's not easy.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: When we hear comments that absenteeism might be higher, or we're doing the quote thing, and pointing fingers and saying that the system allows people to take more than what they have earned or deserve, to me it would be very frustrating.

When we talk about the removal of the dispute resolution, can you tell us a little about how that impacts your members now, or how it will?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: The positions of the union of Canadian correctional officers within the bargaining unit were designated 100% essential. We still have an agreement in principle to that effect. The previous regime made it so they were on the arbitration road, and historically they would have selected the conciliation strike road, although they recognize they wouldn't have the ability to strike.

If this bill is passed, they will be able to return to what they would previously have selected as a resolution method.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: How did that impact?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I'm sure there were frustrations on their side. I couldn't speak for them. They would have likely chosen another dispute resolution mechanism.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: When you say they were designated an essential service, what's the difference between essential and non-essential?

● (1605)

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Essential work would be contributions to the security and safety of the public. The work they do, direct custody care, control of inmate population, clearly has a direct impact on security. Therefore, that's why they would be designated as essential.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Okay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Thibodeau, let me ask you the same thing.

[*English*]

Is border security a hard business to be in?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: It is challenging.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: How do you think this legislation would affect your members?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: Regarding the current level of designation of essential services for the FB bargaining unit, the border services officers are currently at 75%. From that perspective, whether you're operating under the previous, the current, or the proposed new, they would have access to a conciliation strike. However, the 75% was close to the rule of 80%. If that was to disappear, they would probably remain on the conciliation strike route, which has historically been their choice as well. Those are two distinct elements.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Previously when they took away the sick leave, how did that impact your members?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: That proposal came forward. I have not been able to statistically quantify the impact from the perspective of the usage of sick leave. It was an element that was raised in various union-management discussions at the departmental level. It was a proposal in bargaining, and colleagues from the TBS can articulate the impact from that perspective.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Bowlby, are there any statistics from StatsCan that show prior information on sick leave? Are we tracking those sorts of things?

The Chair: Give a very brief answer, please.

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: Sure.

Are you referring to sick leave within StatsCan or sick leave for the public service as a whole?

Mr. Dan Ruimy: For the public service.

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: There's some information from the labour force survey. I do not have it with me today, but we could provide it to you.

Mr. Dan Ruimy: Yes, that would be great if you could provide it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

MP Trudel, please, go ahead.

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): My apologies for interrupting. I didn't want to interrupt during the questioning, but some of the questioning is focusing, I think, outside the lines of what the people here today are responsible for reporting to our committee. A week ago, Chair, the people were representing the unions primarily. The people who are here today represent the different departments. They're non-partisan. They represent the department, so if we were to ask them how the union members and public employees felt about this, that would have been a good question last week. However, to ask questions like that this week is out of the expertise and the responsibilities of the people there.

I just bring that as a caution, that we focus on the responsibilities of the people before us.

The Chair: Thank you. I'm not sure that's a point of order, but I take your meaning.

As you know, I tend to give both sides a lot of latitude when it comes to their relevance, but I will keep that in mind moving forward.

Thank you, Mr. Warawa.

Sorry, Madam Trudel, please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I hope my questions will make sense.

Thank you very much for joining us today in committee. It is a pleasure to hear from you.

My first question goes to Mr. Thibodeau and deals with the dispute resolution process. However, if anyone else wants to answer afterwards, I would also welcome their comments.

What are the pros and cons of using conciliation rather than arbitration?

Hon. Steven Blaney: That is a good question.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Thank you.

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: That is a very interesting question.

In arbitration, the tough decisions in the final settlement are left to a third party, while in a negotiation, when there is access to the right to strike, you are essentially obliged to come to an understanding. So it is a matter of meeting each other halfway, according to the view that the union may take, according to its reading of the facts, in terms of its negotiating power and its power to choose.

That is how I would answer your question.

● (1610)

Ms. Karine Trudel: Thank you.

Does anyone want to add anything?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: During the conciliation process, the parties appear before a public interest commission. This third party hears the parties and submits a report at the end of the process. However, this report is non-binding on the parties: They are not required to follow the commission's recommendations.

During arbitration, people also appear before a third party and state their case. However, this third party's report puts an end to the process, meaning that it is binding on the parties and fundamentally becomes the new collective agreement. It is possible that the bargaining agents prefer to have the right to continue to negotiate for strategic reasons.

Once the report is submitted, choosing conciliation can potentially lead to a strike, but it can also lead to further discussion on the aspects covered by the report. It is a strategic issue for bargaining agents. They must ask themselves if it is preferable to give the last word to a third party, or to retain the possibility of continuing talks with the employer, even after the third party has given its opinion on the work conditions and the disputes.

All in all, these are the distinctions to be made.

Ms. Karine Trudel: From what I understand, the current bill makes it possible to choose between conciliation and arbitration, whereas the 2013 bill did not allow conciliation.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: The process was mandated by the legislation, and depended on the percentage of people within the unit who were identified as being part of the essential services. It wasn't really a choice: It depended on the legislative provision.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Mrs. Hassan, in your opening statement, you talked about the preponderant factors. Can you please tell us more about them? Can you also talk about the advantages, disadvantages and requirements related to these factors?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Bill C-62 includes certain factors that can be considered. These factors are taken into consideration by a third party when the parties' requests are being evaluated.

Under the current legislation, public interest commissions, during conciliations, or arbitrators, during arbitrations, must prioritize two factors — retention and recruitment — as well as Canada's current financial situation. This gives perspective. The third party must give more weight to these two factors than to the other factors. Clearly, this influences decision-making.

● (1615)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

MP Morrissey, go ahead, please.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

My question is to Ms. Henderson.

You made a comment that budget 2015 had an impact on the sick leave provisions. One of the criticisms of this bill, a criticism coming from the opposition, is that reinstating those provisions of sick leave will impose a cost to the taxpayer. The number that's been used is $900,000 in cash.

There's been some question as to how the savings were booked by the former government—the costs that were booked and the savings of $900,000 in cash savings—and whether that was real or not, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer found in a July 2014 report that sick leave cost almost nothing.

Could you comment on that?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Basically what this bill proposes to do is to return the sick leave regime to the negotiations process. The impact of the costs of sick leave.... Currently the collective agreements contain provisions around sick leave; therefore, there's an allotted number of sick leave days and there's a disability regime that is in place. What Bill C-4 proposed to do was to remove that and impose a sick leave regime that would impose upon the public service the new regime and disability plan, as well.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Do you have any knowledge of the cost numbers of that?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Knowledge of the...?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Of the cost implications of that sick leave when it was done.

I would go, then, to Ms. Hassan because part of yours is to provide advice and guidance to departments on compensation.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: In regard to the costing, what we do know is that in February 2016, in a document called "The Canadian Economic Outlook", the Department of Finance reversed the sick leave savings—that's what we see—and the cost is close to $1.3 billion. That's the costing as we see it.

In regard to your specific question is...?

Mr. Robert Morrissey: You're referencing the particular numbers that you had there at that particular time. In 2014, the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who we routinely hear being quoted, reported that there was no cost. Sick leave cost almost nothing because of a lot of the positions are not particularly backfilled.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: It is true that if on a given day a person calls in sick and is not replaced we can notionally say there's no cost, although there's a loss of productivity.

In terms of what the total cost of the sick leave is, if we look at the total number of days that are on the books, it doesn't mean that everyone will be taking all of those days, but if you calculate the cost associated with that liability, that's the number that has been booked by the Department of Finance.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: When was there a change in the accounting process dealing with how sick leave was to be accounted for?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: I cannot answer that question.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Why did government make the change when it did? It was referenced in the budget 2015 budget documents, so the change was made at that time.

● (1620)

Ms. Sandra Hassan: You're asking why at a certain point the Department of Finance decided to reverse the savings? If that is the question, the answer would be when the Liberal government committed to proposed legislation to repeal the Bill C-59.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Could you just walk us through the difference on how it actually records within the government's fiscal position. Is it a cash cost or is it actually a paper entry?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: I'm not in a position to answer that question. It would be the Department of Finance who could answer that. I'm not in a position to answer that.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Is that information you could get and provide back?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: I can ask.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: You can ask.

The Chair: You have only about 10 seconds, so maybe a comment but no question.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay, I'll pick it up later.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Sangha, go ahead, please.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much for today's input. It's very valuable.

My question is to Ms. Hassan. During your presentation you talked about the dispute resolution process. I know it's a very legally binding award when it's delivered by the arbitrator. Otherwise, if you choose a dispute process through collective bargaining, it's not binding.

Secondly, there's no provision to strike in the arbitration process, whereas when there's conciliation, you can strike and during this strike, processes can also be maintained.

What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of conciliation and arbitration?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: The processes have different outcomes, and under C-62, it is the bargaining agent who will be in a position to choose which one of the two processes they wish to adopt.

In the first case, as I indicated to Madam Trudel, when they're in the conciliation strike, the parties—the bargaining agent and the employer—would submit their positions to a public interest commission and that public interest commission would provide a report after their analysis, but unless the parties choose otherwise, the report is non-binding.

Consequently, once the report is released, steps are taken, and the bargaining unit can be in a strike position. They could strategically, at the beginning of the round, decide that instead of that, they would prefer the arbitration route. In that case, they again submit their positions to an arbitrator, but that arbitrator's report is binding on the parties, so it ends the discussion. It puts the final decision in regard to that round in the hands of someone else completely.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: If collective bargaining is there, then there's a possibility of conciliation or some sort of settlement between both the parties, which will not have a legally binding effect until and unless they choose it. Parties can choose to be legally bound by that conciliation.

● (1625)

Ms. Sandra Hassan: That is true.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Otherwise, it's open.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: That is true.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: With this type of method, what will be the impact on the total length of the dispute resolution process?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: The arbitration, once the report is handed down, puts an end to the round because the report will form the next collective agreement.

In the conciliation mode, it's longer because once we get the report from the public interest commission—because it's non-binding—the parties are not only more than welcome, but are invited to continue discussions to be able to come to an agreement if they don't completely agree with the public interest commission's report.

Dennis, go ahead.

Mr. Dennis Duggan (Senior Labour Relations Consultant, Compensation and Labour Relations, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat): Excuse me, I just want to add to that.

Occasionally—and it does happen this way—the conciliation board, or in this case the public interest commission's report, can be unanimous. This actually means that the parties agreed with the report, which results in a settlement. Often in this process, in terms of conciliation with a public interest commission, there's a lot of mediation going on—by the board and by the commission working with the parties to reach a settlement—so it serves as a means by which the parties can achieve a settlement. It's a tool that way, but it's occasionally through the process that they actually achieve a settlement in the process.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: The right to strike is still available now...?

Mr. Dennis Duggan: If there is no agreement at that point, yes.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Do you think there is a possibility of any charter right being questioned? Under Saskatchewan law there was a charter right that was abrogated, and that's why that court case was—

Mr. Dennis Duggan: In terms of essential services, yes.

The Chair: Be very quick, please.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: Is there any possibility of a charter right question now?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: The bargaining agents have a file, a constitutional challenge to the current legislation, and it has been put in abeyance with the understanding that the current government would repeal it, but certainly if the legislation is not repealed, the bargaining agent, I would suspect, would restart the charter challenge, and their main argument is that the current legislation is very similar to the legislation that was enacted in Saskatchewan and declared unconstitutional.

Mr. Ramesh Sangha: What remedy do you—

The Chair: I have to cut you off there, guys. I'm sorry. Maybe we'll come back around to that.

Mr. Warawa, go ahead, please.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you.

I have some questions for Correctional Service of Canada.

I think your report said there are 18,000 staff across the country with the Correctional Service, and you listed off varying levels of what they do: front-line corrections officers, parole officers. Let me stop at corrections officers. Maximum, medium, and minimum security each involve different levels of responsibility and stress. Having been on the community advisory board when I was in local government, the Matsqui Institution, compared with Kent Institution or Mountain Institution, the levels of stress on staff are vastly different.

Anyway, I am so thankful for people who are serving Canada in that way. They definitely need to be properly compensated and protected, and if they're sick—and we've heard from a recent report that 53% of RCMP officers are struggling with different levels of PTSD with what they face. When you are in a maximum security institution and you have awful stuff thrown at you—dirty cocktails—and there are people with shanks, it's a very dangerous environment.

Somebody who is a parole officer has not nearly the level of stress. Program delivery officers, health professionals, electricians, food service staff, corporate administration—it depends on what you're doing what the stress level is. I would assume that people in higher-stress types of jobs would have a greater chance of needing some sick time off. That's an assumption. I don't know if it's accurate.

My question is related to an article from January of last year in *Maclean's*, which highlighted the disparity in the number of sick days that are available to the public sector as opposed to the private sector. In the public sector it was 13.5 and in the private sector it was 8.3. They said that in the public sector, union agreements allow federal employees to take up to 15 work days off each year over and above their vacation time—15 days of each year—and that federal employees had banked 15 million days of unused sick leave.

I also read that three-quarters of your funding for Corrections Canada is for staffing and benefits for staff. One-quarter of your funding is for actually taking care of very dangerous people who pose a risk to the community. With these changes, are you going to have increased funding from the federal government to accommodate the additional cost for sick leave when you have people gone and maybe have a shortage of staff? That's one question.

The other question is on essential service. The average Canadian would assume that corrections would be deemed an essential service, that you're not going to strike and not show up; otherwise, you're going to have chaos and people killed, riots, and very dangerous situations. Can you give us an example of which federal corrections would not be deemed an essential service? It sounds as though Bill C-62 would have that on the table, which I think Canadians would find very unreasonable.

Could you comment on those two? Are you going to get increased funding to pay for this $1.3 billion, and what happens on essential services?

● (1630)

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Firstly, budget 2018 proposed certain measures for the Correctional Service that maintained operating budgets.

In terms of your second question—

Mr. Mark Warawa: "Maintained operating budgets"...?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: That's right.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Was there no increase?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I'm not sure of exactly the numbers. We can give that to you, certainly.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay.

Ms. Kristel Henderson: In terms of essential services, the work that's done within the institutions and within our community offices is certainly work that would be deemed essential for the safety and security of the public.

You asked a question around what types of jobs or duties wouldn't be considered essential, potentially. There are a number of positions within national or regional headquarters that support programs, for instance. There may be some positions related to internal services positions. I can think of a few within human resources, perhaps, such as training, learning, and development positions. The kinds of positions where there's no direct or indirect impact to the provision of essential services within our institutions and our communities would be the types of positions that may not provide essential-type work.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you very much.

The Chair: MP Fortier, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have one question, then I will give the rest of my speaking time to Mr. Morrissey.

Mr. Thibodeau, can you quickly describe the current state of the work relations in your sector of the public service?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: Thank you for your question.

The Canada Border Services Agency just concluded an agreement in principle with our employees' main bargaining agent. So the climate is perhaps better now than it was a few weeks ago.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: All right, thank you.

Ms. Hume, how is it where you are?

● (1635)

[*English*]

Ms. Ann Marie Hume (Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Human Resources Branch, Canada Revenue Agency): With the Canada Revenue Agency, like my colleague, we recently concluded an agreement with the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, and we not too long ago concluded an agreement with the Union of Taxation Employees as well.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Thank you.

Actually, I would like all of you to answer this question.

[*English*]

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Similar to my colleagues here, we recently concluded a collective agreement with the correctional officers, and as well, therefore, the others that Treasury Board is the employer for.

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: We're in the middle of collective bargaining for the statistical survey operations. There are two bargaining tables. I would say that it's going very well right now—very collaborative.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sandra Hassan: In the core public administration, 23 of the 27 groups have agreements, whether signed or in principle.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Thank you everyone.

Mr. Morrissey, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you.

I'd like to understand a bit more about the amendment that was suggested by PSAC during their testimony last week. The President of the Treasury Board said last Monday that this bill is about "restoring the balance" to the labour relations regime that existed before the former Conservative government changed the law in 2013. Just to confirm, that is what Bill C-62 does, correct? It restores the labour relations regime that was in place before 2013. Am I correct?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: That is correct.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Thank you.

The amendment that was mentioned by PSAC would remove a clause that was a part of the labour relations regime. Was that clause ever subject to a court challenge during the decade prior to the former government's changes?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: To our knowledge, that was not subject to a court challenge.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay. I just want to go back to see if you can get a clarification. I don't expect that you would have that information here.

Could you also report back on the difference in the accounting entry and the actual cash cost to the government from people taking sick leave?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: We are checking with our colleagues, and as soon as I get the answer I will answer that question.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: If you could provide it to the committee, I would appreciate it: the difference in the actual cash cost to the treasury versus an accounting entry.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: We will look into that. Ideally, if we could get back to you before the end of this meeting, that would be our preference.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Okay.

I'd like some clarification. Am I correct in saying that banked sick leave cannot be cashed out when a public servant retires?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: That is correct. Banked sick leave can only be used by employees during employment. At the end of employment, our terms and conditions are such that if those days have not been used.... It's like a life insurance policy. If you've never been significantly sick and there are a considerable number of days left, you leave and retire. You don't cash them out.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Therefore, following your process earlier, that would have been at one time booked as a potential liability to the government that would never be incurred. Am I correct?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: The total liability is the total number of days banked. Whether people use it or not depends on their lifestyle and their luck.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: It would be included in a liability. However, in a case where they never use it, then the liability that would be booked would not be the same as the actual cash payout down the road at any particular time. I'm just curious because you said that they cannot carry it.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: It can't be cashed out at the end of a person's employment. You use it, or you lose it. Hopefully, you don't get sick to the point of having to use it.

● (1640)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Just for the record, what would the ratio of people be? Again, the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report states that most civil servants are not replaced when they're out on sick leave.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: That is correct.

If I may, I'd like to turn it to Geoff.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Sure.

The Chair: Be very brief, please. We're running low on time.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Okay.

StatsCan has looked into the usage by public servants, and Geoff has that information here.

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: With regard to your question earlier, Sandra had that data in front of her, so I'll pass that on to the committee.

The same survey that I mentioned earlier, the labour force survey, tells us that in the broad public sector, on average, 13.5 days of work are lost due to absenteeism. That is the same number that was referenced in the *Maclean's* article that was referred to by the member on this side of the table.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Falk, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Thank you to all of you for being here today.

My first question is for Stats Canada.

Do you have on you any current statistics with regard to sick days in the private sector versus the public sector at the moment?

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: That's the number I just gave. The public sector number is 13.5 days. The private sector number is 8.4 days.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Do you collect that data regionally?

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: The data are collected from the labour force survey. To what degree we can produce them regionally depends upon the sample size in that region. For bigger regions, we could produce some estimates. For smaller regions, we couldn't.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

My next question is for CBSA.

I was wondering if the department has heard how front-line workers are affected, or if they are being affected, by the number of illegal migrants crossing the border at non-border crossings, and if this is taking a toll on the health of those employees and on their usage of sick leave.

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: I don't have any data that would support either way with regard to immigration patterns and usage of sick leave.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: At all...?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: I don't have anything with me. I don't even have an idea that I could start guessing from, and I wouldn't guess. I would need to go back and do some research in relation to that.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Could you provide that to us?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: I'll see what's available and what kind of information I would have that would be useful and meaningful.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Okay.

My second question is for you as well.

How would the proposed changes in this legislation affect the department's ability to adjust an essential service agreement in extraordinary circumstances—for example, if we had a looming strike and there was an influx of illegal migrants crossing the border at non-border crossings?

Mr. Marc Thibodeau: The proposed regime requires consultation and discussions with the bargaining agent, as opposed to the previous one, so that would be one point.

The other element would be to go back to the point I made about 95% of the front line being designated as essential under the agreement we were able to negotiate with the Public Service Alliance of Canada. We'd have to see how many more officers would need to be designated pending the crisis.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you.

My next question is for the Treasury Board. With sick leave—because we can have banked sick leave—is it common practice that employees would use up all of their sick leave before retirement?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Are you asking if it's common practice?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I guess I'm asking what the statistics are. Is that what happens? If people have six months, would they use that six months of sick leave up before their retirement?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: I don't have those statistics. If you're asking if people are using their sick leave as vacation days, that would be an inappropriate use of the sick leave. The sick leave is to be used by employees when they need to be absent for medical reasons.

We must take the population into consideration. People who retire are typically toward the end of their career and more aged. With age comes all sorts of problems, and consequently it would be unfair to equate the use of the sick days solely with the fact that they are retiring. In many instances we see people who actually have heart attacks while they're at the office, or they leave the office and have a heart attack, and are off for quite a number or days and then decide that they don't have the strength to come back and they then retire.

It's often misinterpreted as being a use of their sick leave before they retire, but in many instances where we have older employees who have worked hard, been under extremely stressful situations for years—for long periods of time—it has an impact on the body.

● (1645)

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Trudel.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

If it's possible, we would like to have the average amount of sick leave that is used by civil servants before retiring.

The Chair: Is that something that is readily available?

Does Statistics Canada have it, maybe?

Mr. Geoff Bowlby: No, we don't have those numbers.

I don't know if it's within the database of the Treasury Board.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: On a point of order, is this relevant?

Hon. Steven Blaney: It is important for Canadian taxpayers to know, on average, how much sick leave is normally used by civil servants before they retire.

We heard today that there may be justifiable reasons for that, but Canadians have the right to know how sick leave is used, on average, by our civil servants before they retire.

The Chair: This is not a point of order.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Is this a point of order?

Hon. Steven Blaney: If we cannot get this information today, Mr. Chair, we'll proceed in another way.

The Chair: This isn't a point of order. This is a question, so I'm going to move on.

Madame Trudel.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Thank you.

My question is for Ms. Henderson.

In the second-last paragraph on page 7 of your presentation, you say that "if enacted, Bill C-62 would allow consideration of the terms and conditions of employment related to the sick leave of CSC employees to be dealt with as part of the collective bargaining process."

Can you please give me more details on what this paragraph means exactly?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: Roughly speaking, it means that the bill would allow employers and bargaining agents to negotiate the sick leave and disability regime to include it in the applicable collective agreements.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Is the disability insurance plan currently included in the collective agreements, or does it have to be negotiated?

Ms. Kristel Henderson: I will refer the negotiation aspect of the question to my colleague from the Treasury Board.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Perfect.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Can you repeat the question, please?

Ms. Karine Trudel: The question was related to the presentation.

If passed, Bill C-62 will include the work conditions related to sick leave in the bargaining process. Could you explain the process further?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Bill C-62 plans to repeal the measures introduced by Bill C-65 that are part of the current legislation.

Fundamentally, once these provisions are repealed, we will return to the status quo, and we will have to sit down with union representatives and negotiate every amendment to the provisions of the collective agreements, as well as those of the short- and long-term disability insurance plan. The employer will not be able to impose this; it will have to be negotiated.

There are currently two common negotiation tables discussing these issues. The Public Service Alliance of Canada chairs one table, and the institute chairs the other. The future of the plan is regularly discussed.

● (1650)

Ms. Karine Trudel: As you said, Bill C-65 was amended. Were sick leave and the disability insurance plan imposed by the employer as a result of these amendments?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: Bill C-65 allowed the employer to impose it. This power was delegated, but never exercised. Consequently, the legislation included the possibility of imposing it, but the president of the Treasury Board would have had to recommend that his department impose it. That would have been a Treasury Board decision, but this power was never exercised.

Ms. Karine Trudel: Maybe that's why—

[*English*]

The Chair: If you have one more thought, go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: I was telling myself that, since 23 collective agreements have been concluded and instructions given, the tables were established in preparation for Bill C-62.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: During bargaining, separate agreements are included in the collective agreements to discuss that very issue. It is therefore part of the collective bargaining process. Based on what the bargaining agents have understood, the current legislation would be repealed.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, there was a request for information, a simple statistic of what percentage of people actually use the unused sick leave. Is it being used at the end of a person's career, so that six months ahead of time, before individuals actually retire, they start a process of possibly being sick? We were not told that number. I think it's reasonable that we have that number.

If we can't get that number from people who are actually the heads of the departments, the assistant deputy minister, if we can't get it from these people who are here to advise us on Bill C-62, then where can we get that number? I think it's a fair question, and I seek your guidance.

Where would we get that number?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Warawa.

That was actually a point of order that ended up being a question, not a point of order. The question was asked, and I believe was answered quite eloquently by Ms. Hassan that it's not as simple as pulling a statistic out of a hat, that each situation could be different, and could lead to a misleading scenario.

Is this something that could be produced?

Ms. Sandra Hassan: We're looking at whether that data exists.

The Chair: That's fair enough. Thank you.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Could I then ask, if it exists—and it must with computers—we must be able to know the percentage of people who are using their sick leave at the end of their career. It could be justified, as in, "I'm sick, that's why I'm retiring early" or "that's why I'm retiring when I am." What is the percentage? I can't imagine that this information is not available.

The Chair: If Ms. Hassan said she was going to see if it exists, I'm sure she'll come back to this committee.

Ms. Sandra Hassan: I'm looking to see if the data exists.

The Chair: I will remind Mr. Warawa that it's not a justification of whether or not somebody is sick. It's the only way it can be used. Again, as Ms. Hassan pointed out, this would be essentially fraud if used as vacation time.

Thank you very much to the witnesses for being here today.

I want to remind everybody that we're going to be back in this room on Wednesday, May 2, getting finally back to experiential learning. We're going to be focusing specifically on volunteerism and school-to-work transition strategies. We also have a few upcoming reminders. We're going to continue with experiential learning, but we also have confirmation of the main estimates when all three ministers will be appearing on May 23.

Thank you very much, everybody.

We are adjourned.

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